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## THE NORTHWEST SITUATION AND THE MOSLEM PEOPLES

Ma T'zu-po

**I**

All political questions in present-day China are affected by international storms on sea and land. The reasons are not hard to find. For after the Great War, America and the Soviet Union each strove for political and economic leadership in Europe and Asia, and in the struggle tried to control the continents by means of superiority on the five oceans, or to control the five oceans by means of superiority on the continents. On both sides, popular education and social awareness tended to overflow and influence the world. Culture, science, and communication, are making rapid progress towards a commonality, the final unification of the world. The attendant intensifying clash between USSR and USA is certain to accelerate the progress of our struggle for revival. Therefore, in planning 100 years ahead for our nation, and deciding on a policy that cannot be defeated, we must seek it in the midst of Soviet-American conflict.

The whole northwest problem, which is based on our nation's effort to survive and develop, must be solved in the midst of the American-Soviet conflict to dominate the world. The northwest crisis is intimately related to world changes. Our present troubles are due to our struggle for survival and our dependence on conflicting foreign powers for help; as a result, we cannot be masters of peaceful reconstruction in our own house. After the Opium War our nation entered the stage of increasing world stress. For 100 years our people have managed to survive amid trying conditions mainly through discipline. Only by resisting invasion for 8 years and gaining final victory have we retained our present territory. Our present pains of opposition are because our people are seeking development amidst contradictions, freedom from restriction.

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survival against attack, increase of our powers of adaptation, and hastening of the process of change as preparation for future responsibility for world affairs.

But since the victory, conditions have changed. While the enemy by sea has been defeated, the enemy by land grows more aggressive; hereafter, the northwest crisis will become more acute. This is especially so because the independence of Outer Mongolia and the secession of the Chinese Communists, tempts foreign power deep into our interior and greatly impairs the international balance of power in the Far East. The situation is very serious. The Communist tide, relying on its pressure which extends over Europe and Asia from north to south, can hinder our plans for urgently awaited, peaceful, unified, dependable progress. The necessity for defense measures faced with great pains by the men of the Han and Tang dynasties will be repeated before our eyes. The fierceness of the land robbers of other days [Tartars and Mongols] was worse than that of the pirates [Japanese, of recent date]; and this is something that must cause us alarm.

## II

The political situation in the northwest is closely related to future changes in the northwest problem. In the past years, the northwest has been a hinterland far removed from the War of Resistance, and a long way from the central plain which was the focus of political conflict. It was the only area until now unaffected by civil war and party struggles. The region is remote, its economy backward, and its society marked by features different from those of the central plain. Kansu, Ningxia, Tsinghai, and Sinkiang have a total population of 13,000,000, and include six races, Han, Moslem, Wei (Uighurs), Manchu, Mongols, and Tibetans.

Among these six races, the Moslem and Wei are Mohammedan in faith, and are the largest in numbers; they comprise about 60 percent of the population of the northwest. The four provinces have about 7 million Mohammedans: Sinkiang 3½ million, Kansu 2 million, Tsinghai 700,000, and Ningxia 800,000. This religious group with a common faith is an important stabilizing force in northwest society. In the 200 years of Manchu rule, cruel internecine wars, whose evil effects continue to this day were waged. Since the Republic began, the Mohammedans have been liberated by the San Min Chu I and placed on an equal basis with all other races in the nation. Their race spirit has been gradually revived and their position grows more important. But, evil events in the last 200 years have led the Mohammedans to keep aloof from national politics, society, and culture, a condition which cannot be corrected at once.

The isolation of the Mohammedans in China has made them the objective of international intrigue and utilization by domestic parties. During the war, there was the Japanese militarists' special desire to win over North China and the northwest Mohammedans. After the victory and Mongolian independence, there was the unfortunate direct interference over a boundary, several thousand "li" long, between the northwest and neighboring countries. By their use of political and cultural penetration, foreign powers could gain their objectives by a bloodless victory.

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Thus, Sinkiang became the goal of direct penetration by foreign forces; hence, the I-ning incident, the emergence of "East Turkestan," and now the movement for the U-la-shan government in North China, as a response. While the northwest can escape the domestic political turmoil, yet the crisis caused by direct political intervention from the outside is more urgent than that of all the regions in the civil war.

## III

From the viewpoint of topography, the northwest is the focus of China's great territory. In this conception, Lan-chow is the heart, Ningxia the left shoulder, Tsinghai the right shoulder, Sinkiang the head, and Ho-hai (the Kansu Corridor) the neck. The tranquility of the situation in the northwest depends upon the stability of Sinkiang. Tao Tsung-t'ang said: "Protecting Sinkiang is the way to protect Outer Mongolia; protecting Outer Mongolia is the way to strengthen the Imperial District." This is a farsighted view of national defense, a quick comprehension of how China's central plain and the northwest depend on each other and involve mutual protection. Now that Outer Mongolia is independent, and Sinkiang languishes alone, Ho-hai is exposed, Ningxia is invaded by enemies, the entire northwest is threatened, and the situation is serious. An unprecedented national defense crisis exists in the northwest. Now it is more necessary than ever to protect effectively the important territory of Sinkiang. A study of the historic control of Sinkiang in respect to its geography reveals that it seems to have been controlled through the strength of its perimeter defenses. In the past, the chief points on the perimeter in controlling Sinkiang have been Mongolia and Ho-hai. Today the situation is reversed, and the main point has become Central Asia. In former days, for the government to protect Sinkiang, we would have had first to strengthen the combined political, economic, and military forces of Outer Mongolia and Ho-hai as outer defenses, and having made strong the social forces, they go into the heart of Sinkiang. Then from Sinkiang, we would have had to influence other places on the perimeter and expand into Central Asia. Now the situation is exactly the opposite. The external forces of the countries of Central Asia look towards Sinkiang. And Mongolia having escaped from our embrace, and Ho-hai being barren and weak, we lack a strong well-placed perimeter with which to meet the modern situation. Since the geographical balance is broken, host and guest will have to change places. This is a long-standing disastrous condition which we must remedy by pouring out all the strength of our nation and race. Our great duty lies in the reconstruction of the northwest situation.

## IV

We have told above how to protect all Sinkiang; to tranquilize the northwest is our urgent duty now. While China for the present relies on the Sino-Soviet Agreement to forestall direct clashes, and depends on the signed stipulation for peace in Sinkiang to gain

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temporary ease, these are not enough to ensure enduring peace. A frontal military clash results in starting a large-scale political and cultural conflict, which means total warfare. In an arena of frontal conflict, responding on the principle of culture against culture, organization against organization, society against society, during the past year we have broken through heavy obstacles after many trials. With invisible strength we have defended ourselves against invisible attack.

After Achmed Kiang left unceremoniously and flew back to I-ning, the political situation in Sinkiang took a setback, the stipulation of peace was invisibly broken, and our greatest gain was that a more advantageous condition than that of a year before was created. We have strengthened our hold somewhat as a result of General Chang Chih-chung's tireless efforts, night and day. Of course, we cannot be satisfied with this and now relax. For the existence of the East Turkestan Special District is valuable capital for international political conflict and directly affects Sinkiang; it has become a threat to the main strength of our perimeter. Therefore, the most serious period during which the northwest will feel the oppression of outside force is by no means over. To remedy this serious situation, we must offer effective resistance by exerting extensive social and cultural forces, and thereby bring about a new state of affairs in the northwest.

V

We claim that present-day Sinkiang is not only the gate to our northwest but also an important base for protecting our struggle for national survival and fight for world peace. To tranquilize the northwest we must securely protect Sinkiang. But Sinkiang's geographical value to the continent is not as a rampart but as a highway. It is not a self-sufficient entity that can shut its doors and be self-sufficient on its own economy and culture. For several thousand years Sinkiang, under North-South military attack and East-West cultural shuttling, made blind progress. Now the North-South threat is ended, but the East-West conflict is becoming fiercer. United invasion from the west is penetrating to the heart of Sinkiang: there are several Mohammedan starting points from the Central Asia section of the perimeter. A complicated trinity of religious, racial, cultural inducements help to raise trouble in Sinkiang and make the situation worse. If we want to resist this power from the west, we must likewise build strong points on the perimeter, using the entire social forces of the northwest to support Sinkiang and stabilize it.

Sinkiang has more than 200,000 Moslems who have migrated from the interior of China and are called "T'ung-kar" by the local people. While heretofore they have felt no interest in politics, yet because they have strong religious faith and deep national consciousness, they show much cohesiveness, and are full of a creative spirit of daring, suffering, and patience. From the economic and military standpoint they possess latent strength, which unconsciously influences politics in Sinkiang. While they are only a sparse 200,000, yet they live in prosperous sections of the most important cities along the trunk lines of communication in all Sinkiang, and are ordinarily in close contact with patriotic coreligionists

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in all races. Add to this that in Kansu, Tsinghai, and Ningxia there are more than three million like-minded Moslems. This group is an efficient social force for stabilizing the northwest, and also a great potential resource for northwest national defense.

If we wish to reconstruct the northwest situation, and strengthen the peace of the Border Regions, we should study how to put in motion this large latent social force, and create a perimeter situation that contributes to supporting national defense in Sinkiang. We hope that the Central Government under the appeal to hasten the cultural advancement of the Moslems will stabilize and reconstruct the whole northwest. Then the slogan of East Turkestan will of course fail to meet the needs of most Moslem races and will disappear. The Wei-wu-ern-ha-sa-ke' are a minority race.

If 50 million people men with sincere faith in a true God help three million people to develop, and can in a spirit of mutual help cooperate to protect their national territory, appealing for religious unity and political equality, not only need the government have no concern as to the west, but the people also will enjoy the blessings of peace. Then, under such exertions, a democratic government in Sinkiang can be fully realized, and all flames of narrow race feelings and international intrigues can thus be extinguished. Our solving of the northwest problem will shift from being always on the defensive to that of having the initiative. The future status of political rule in Sinkiang will change from that of servant to master. The reconstruction of the northwest situation can thus bring about a new state of affairs.

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